

REMARKS

Claim has been amended. Support for amended Claim 1 can be found at paragraph [0018]. Claim 12-15 have been added. Support for claim 13 can be found in the original subject matter of Claim 1. Support for claim 12 and 15 can be found in Examples 1 and 2 of the present specification. Support for claim 14 can be found in paragraph [0028]. Upon entry of this Amendment, which is respectfully requested, Claims 1-15 will be all the claims pending in the application.

Response to Rejection Under § 103

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0088006 to Yanagisawa et al. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The mixture of the rubber solution and the slurry solution is typically unstable and as such may be coagulated by a stimulus even if a coagulating agent is has not been added. Thus, one skilled in the art commonly expects that unintended coagulation is caused by the use of a high shear mixer. Accordingly, one skilled in the art would not use such a high shear mixer in order to avoid such an unintended coagulation.

To the contrary, in regard to present Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-mentioned problem is not caused by a shear speed of not less than 2000/s, even if the high shear mixer is used.

Yanagisawa does not disclose or suggest that the unintended coagulation is not caused when the high shear mixer having a shear speed of not less than 2000/s is used to mix the rubber solution and the slurry solution, as recited in present Claim 1.

In addition, as to new Claims 12 and 15, when the rubber solution and the slurry solution are simultaneously charged in the mixing step, the resulting mixture has a constant ratio of the rubber to the filler at all times.

However, if either the rubber solution or the slurry solution is charged before charging the other, a mixture having a different ratio of rubber to filler than that of steady state is produced in a portion to which either the rubber solution or the slurry solution is not charged. Thus, the target homogeneity cannot be accomplished.

Regarding Claim 13, Yanagisawa discloses that a high shear mixer is used to prepare an aqueous slurry of filler, but does not disclose or suggest a static mixer as recited in present Claim 13. Further, a static mixer does not give a high shear to the mixture such that it hardly causes the coagulation of the mixture.

Regarding Claim 14, when a coagulating agent is added to a mixture, the mixture is coagulated, while maintaining the composition at the time the agent was added. It's as if the state of the rubber solution and the slurry solution is frozen. Therefore, if the state of the mixture before adding the coagulating agent has a large variation, the resulting coagulated mass will also have a large variation and will be poor in homogeneity.

In contrast, when the rubber solution and the slurry solution are mixed using the static mixer before the coagulating agent is added, homogeneity can be assured. Further, the static

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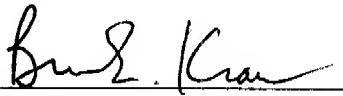
mixer hardly causes coagulation, so that it can mix the rubber solution and the slurry solution more efficiently than a usual mixer.

Thus, Yanagisawa fails to render obvious the present claims. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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